

Chapter 341

(House Bill 847)

AN ACT concerning

**State Coordinator for Autism Strategy and Advisory Stakeholder Group on
Autism-Related Needs**

FOR the purpose of establishing the State Coordinator for Autism Strategy in the Department of Disabilities; requiring the State Coordinator, in consultation with the Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs, to identify and evaluate certain existing services for individuals with autism and their families, develop a certain strategic plan on or before a certain date, identify certain performance measures, and monitor and evaluate the implementation of the strategic plan and the State's success in addressing certain needs; requiring a certain strategic plan to specify certain performance measures; requiring the State Coordinator to submit a certain report to the Secretary of Disabilities, the Governor, and the General Assembly on or before a certain date each year, and to publish each report on the Department's website within a certain number of days after submittal; establishing the Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs; providing for the composition, chair, staffing, and meetings of the Advisory Stakeholder Group; prohibiting a member of the Advisory Stakeholder Group from receiving certain compensation, but authorizing the reimbursement of certain expenses; requiring the Advisory Stakeholder Group to work with the State Coordinator and make recommendations regarding certain matters; providing that the State Coordinator is a member of the Maryland Commission on Disabilities; and generally relating to the State Coordinator for Autism Strategy and the Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism-Related Needs.

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
Article – Human Services
Section 7-101(a), (c), and (d)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2019 Replacement Volume and 2019 Supplement)

BY adding to
Article – Human Services
Section 7-111 and 7-112
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2019 Replacement Volume and 2019 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,
Article – Human Services
Section 7-120(a)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2019 Replacement Volume and 2019 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Human Services

7–101.

- (a) In this subtitle the following words have the meanings indicated.
- (c) “Commission” means the Maryland Commission on Disabilities.
- (d) “Department” means the Department of Disabilities.

7–111.

(A) THERE IS A STATE COORDINATOR FOR AUTISM STRATEGY IN THE DEPARTMENT.

(B) THE STATE COORDINATOR FOR AUTISM STRATEGY, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE ADVISORY STAKEHOLDER GROUP ON AUTISM–RELATED NEEDS ESTABLISHED UNDER § 7–112 OF THIS SUBTITLE, SHALL:

(1) IDENTIFY AND EVALUATE EXISTING PUBLIC, PRIVATE, AND NONPROFIT SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM AND THEIR FAMILIES;

(2) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1, 2021, DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ADDRESSING AUTISM–RELATED NEEDS IN THE STATE, INCLUDING, AT A MINIMUM, NEEDS IN THE AREAS OF EMPLOYMENT, HOUSING, HEALTH CARE, TRAINING FOR FIRST RESPONDERS AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROFESSIONALS, AND IDENTIFICATION AND INTERVENTION;

(3) IDENTIFY NATIONAL BENCHMARKS AND OTHER PERFORMANCE MEASURES TO BE INCLUDED IN THE STRATEGIC PLAN AND USED IN EVALUATING THE SUCCESS OF THE STATE IN ADDRESSING AUTISM–RELATED NEEDS; AND

(4) MONITOR AND EVALUATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN AND THE SUCCESS OF THE STATE IN ADDRESSING AUTISM–RELATED NEEDS, INCLUDING SUCCESS IN MEETING NATIONAL BENCHMARKS.

(C) THE STRATEGIC PLAN REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION SHALL SPECIFY PERFORMANCE MEASURES, INCLUDING ANY NATIONAL BENCHMARKS, FOR MONITORING AND EVALUATING SUCCESS IN ADDRESSING

AUTISM-RELATED NEEDS IN THE STATE INCLUDING, AT A MINIMUM, THE FOLLOWING:

(1) REDUCING THE UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNDEREMPLOYMENT RATES OF PEOPLE WITH AUTISM;

(2) IMPROVING POSTSECONDARY TRANSITION SERVICES AND GRADUATION RATES;

(3) INCREASING DEGREE-GRANTING COLLEGE ADMISSION AND PARTICIPATION AND POSTSECONDARY VOCATIONAL INTERNSHIPS AND APPRENTICESHIPS LEADING TO LICENSURE;

(4) INCREASING THE AVAILABILITY OF SAFE, AFFORDABLE, AND ACCESSIBLE HOUSING;

(5) IDENTIFYING AND REDUCING THE NEGATIVE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES OF PEOPLE WITH AUTISM, INCLUDING:

(I) IDENTIFYING AND IMPROVING CAREGIVER AND FAMILY SUPPORT AND RESPITE SERVICES;

(II) EVALUATING NEED AND IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES FOR THE ADULT AUTISM WAIVER;

(III) REDUCING WAIT TIMES FOR THE AUTISM WAIVER REGISTRY;

(IV) PROMOTING SOCIAL INCLUSION AND UNDERSTANDING FOR PEOPLE WITH AUTISM; AND

(V) ENSURING EQUITABLE ACCESS TO DIAGNOSTIC AND THERAPEUTIC SUPPORT SERVICES IN RURAL AREAS AND FOR UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS; AND

(6) EVALUATING THE NEED FOR AND MAKING RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT, CRIMINAL JUSTICE PROFESSIONALS, OR OTHER FIRST RESPONDERS THAT ADDRESS THE EFFECTIVE RECOGNITION OF AND RESPONSE TO THE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM AND THEIR CAREGIVERS.

(D) (1) ON OR BEFORE JULY 1 EACH YEAR, BEGINNING IN 2021, THE STATE COORDINATOR FOR AUTISM STRATEGY SHALL SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE SECRETARY OF DISABILITIES, THE GOVERNOR, AND, IN ACCORDANCE WITH §

2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON THE DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN REQUIRED UNDER SUBSECTION (B) OF THIS SECTION.

(2) WITHIN 30 DAYS AFTER A REPORT REQUIRED UNDER PARAGRAPH (1) OF THIS SUBSECTION IS SUBMITTED, THE STATE COORDINATOR FOR AUTISM STRATEGY SHALL PUBLISH THE REPORT ON THE DEPARTMENT'S WEBSITE.

7-112.

(A) THERE IS AN ADVISORY STAKEHOLDER GROUP ON AUTISM-RELATED NEEDS.

(B) THE ADVISORY STAKEHOLDER GROUP ON AUTISM-RELATED NEEDS CONSISTS OF THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS:

(1) THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS, OR THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT'S DESIGNEE;

(2) THE SECRETARY OF DISABILITIES, OR THE SECRETARY'S DESIGNEE;

(3) THE SECRETARY OF HUMAN SERVICES, OR THE SECRETARY'S DESIGNEE;

(4) THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH, OR THE SECRETARY'S DESIGNEE;

(5) THE STATE COORDINATOR FOR AUTISM STRATEGY;

(6) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MARYLAND SPEECH-LANGUAGE-HEARING ASSOCIATION;

(7) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MARYLAND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES COUNCIL; ~~AND~~

(8) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE MARYLAND OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY ASSOCIATION;

(9) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ARC MARYLAND;

(10) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF PATHFINDERS FOR AUTISM;

(11) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF ITINERIS; AND

~~(8)~~ (12) THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS, APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR:

(I) A SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGIST;

(II) A PHYSICAL THERAPIST;

~~(III) AN OCCUPATIONAL THERAPIST;~~

~~(IV)~~ (III) A PEDIATRICIAN;

~~(V)~~ (IV) TWO PARENTS OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM;

~~(VI)~~ (V) TWO SELF-ADVOCATES WITH AUTISM;

~~(VII)~~ (VI) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN THE STATE;

~~(VIII)~~ (VII) ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF LOCAL PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS IN THE STATE; ~~AND~~

(VIII) ONE REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY; AND

(IX) ANY ADDITIONAL MEMBERS WITH EXPERTISE OR EXPERIENCE IN AUTISM-RELATED NEEDS AS CONSIDERED NECESSARY.

(C) THE STATE COORDINATOR FOR AUTISM STRATEGY SHALL CHAIR THE ADVISORY STAKEHOLDER GROUP ON AUTISM-RELATED NEEDS.

(D) THE DEPARTMENT OF DISABILITIES SHALL PROVIDE STAFF FOR THE ADVISORY STAKEHOLDER GROUP ON AUTISM-RELATED NEEDS.

(E) A MEMBER OF THE ADVISORY STAKEHOLDER GROUP ON AUTISM-RELATED NEEDS:

(1) MAY NOT RECEIVE COMPENSATION AS A MEMBER OF THE ADVISORY STAKEHOLDER GROUP ON AUTISM-RELATED NEEDS; BUT

(2) IS ENTITLED TO REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENSES UNDER THE STANDARD STATE TRAVEL REGULATIONS, AS PROVIDED IN THE STATE BUDGET.

(F) THE ADVISORY STAKEHOLDER GROUP ON AUTISM-RELATED NEEDS SHALL WORK WITH THE STATE COORDINATOR FOR AUTISM STRATEGY TO:

(1) IDENTIFY AND EVALUATE EXISTING SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM AND THEIR FAMILIES;

(2) DEVELOP A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR ADDRESSING AUTISM-RELATED NEEDS IN THE STATE;

(3) PROMOTE, MONITOR, AND EVALUATE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN; AND

(4) RECOMMEND AND IMPLEMENT CHANGES TO THE STRATEGIC PLAN.

(G) (1) THE ADVISORY STAKEHOLDER GROUP ON AUTISM-RELATED NEEDS SHALL HOLD ITS INITIAL MEETING ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2020.

(2) BEGINNING IN 2021, THE ADVISORY STAKEHOLDER GROUP ON AUTISM-RELATED NEEDS SHALL MEET QUARTERLY EACH CALENDAR YEAR.

7-120.

(a) The Commission consists of:

(1) the following members, appointed by the Governor:

(i) one individual with a physical disability;

(ii) one individual who has experienced mental illness;

(iii) two individuals with a developmental disability, including one with an intellectual disability;

(iv) one individual who is blind;

(v) one individual who is deaf or hard of hearing;

(vi) one parent or foster parent of a child with a disability;

(vii) four members of the general public who have disabilities;

(viii) three representatives from statewide disability advocacy organizations;

(ix) one representative from the home health care industry;

(x) one representative from a statewide organization of providers of services and support for individuals with disabilities;

(xi) one representative from the Alliance of Local Commissions on Disability; and

(xii) two representatives from the Board, one of whom shall be selected by the Secretary and one of whom shall be the Secretary of Budget and Management or the designee of the Secretary of Budget and Management;

(2) one representative from the Senate of Maryland, appointed by the President of the Senate; [and]

(3) one representative from the Maryland House of Delegates, appointed by the Speaker of the House; AND

(4) THE STATE COORDINATOR FOR AUTISM STRATEGY.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That, until the position of State Coordinator for Autism Strategy established under § 7–111 of the Human Services Article, as enacted by Section 1 of this Act, is filled, the Secretary of Disabilities, or the Secretary’s designee, shall chair the Advisory Stakeholder Group on Autism–Related Needs established under § 7–112 of the Human Services Article, as enacted by Section 1 of this Act.

SECTION ~~2~~ 3. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect July 1, 2020.

Enacted under Article II, § 17(c) of the Maryland Constitution, May 8, 2020.